

SPRING 2007

Main Street

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The next generation of Wheat Montana is baking up biofuels in the parents' garage.





Grandpa's Victory Garden, Wolf Point, 1943, Courtesy of Marvin Presser

Fifty-four years ago a group of northeast Montana proponents testified in Washington for an irrigation project to save their dryland farms. One Wolf Point proponent steadfastly believed irrigation would mark the advent of a new era, and it did.

In the summer of that same year, Roosevelt County experienced several major oil strikes, resulting in the Chamber marketing Wolf Point as “The wheat and oil capital of N.E. Montana.” However, this heyday quickly faded by the late 70’s and producers found it necessary to rely on farm subsidies.

Over the past decade, farm subsidies at their highest level represented 12.4% of central and eastern Montana’s income, taking in an average of 87% of the state’s \$3.4 billion in domestic federal farm subsidies. With federal talks of reducing or phasing out farm subsidies by 2013, Montana could experience a considerable loss of income to our farmers and those communities dependent upon agricultural production if we don’t take action for independence.

In this edition of the ***Main Street Montana***, we highlight programs and people who are working towards shifting Montana’s agricultural cash crop economy to one that is boosted by agricultural production and processing of clean and green renewable energy.

Five decades ago it was a plea for water that changed the face of farming. Today there is a new demand for production of biofuels to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. It is my hope that we are on the verge of yet another new era in agriculture, where Montana will become the wheat and alternative fuels capital of the world.

Keith Kelly, Commissioner
Department of Labor & Industry

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with new advertising plate, 1953
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TALENT DRIVING PROSPERITY



The Employment Relations Division works to deter and resolve disputes encountered in the employer-employee relationship, involving issues such as workers' compensation, workplace safety and health, human rights, wage and hour, prevailing wage and public sector collective bargaining.



The Governor's Office of Economic Development serves to advise the governor on policy issues related to economic development; lead the state's business recruitment, retention, expansion, and start-up efforts; and serve as the state's primary economic development liaison between federal, state, and local agencies, Montana tribal governments, private nonprofit economic development organizations and the private sector.

The Montana Department of Labor & Industry administers the **Montana's Agro-Energy Plan - WIRED** program which proposes revitalization of 32 counties and six Indian Reservations through bioproduct and renewable energy development.

The Montana Department of Commerce created the **Made in Montana (MiM)/Grown in Montana (GiM)** Program in 1984 to assist the marketing efforts of Montana residents producing products made within the state.

The Montana Department of Agriculture operates regulatory programs that protect producers, consumers and the environment, as well as development and marketing programs to foster growth in Montana agriculture.

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education manages MAP-WIRED funding resources for two-year colleges and K-12 programs to establish a network of Bio-products Industry Cluster Hubs and Manufacturing Career Cluster Models relevant to the Bioproducts Cluster.



The Census and Economic Information Center (CEIC), located in the Montana Department of Commerce, provides demographic and economic data and analysis. CEIC helps Montana businesses, communities, schools and government agencies access and apply this information.



Editors: Margaret Ore, Christie Wolfe, Michelle Robinson (Editorial Director) & Marissa Kozel (L to R standing)

Graphic Layout: Stevie Harper & Casey Greenwood (L to R sitting)

MONTANA'S ENERGY FUTURE

Governor Schweitzer has spent the better part of his adult life farming, ranching and developing large-scale international agricultural projects. Schweitzer has the mind of a scientist, the heart of a farmer/rancher, and a knack for business; that combination easily explains his great passion and plan for energy development in Montana.

Just weeks after Governor Schweitzer took office, plans were underway to convene the Montana Energy Symposium, which took place in Bozeman in October 2005. This symposium brought together over 700 people from across the state and country to discuss Montana and America's energy future. The ideas that emerged from the symposium provide the framework for the Schweitzer Energy Policy.

Governor Schweitzer believes in energy development done right: clean and green. A clean and green program development plan can help us address our international problem of global warming, our national issue of energy independence,

and our state situation of economic dislocation by encouraging economic development "outside the boot." Montana is blessed with abundant energy resources and is the ideal place to begin weaning the nation off its addiction to foreign oil. When done properly, energy development, including value adding, can create the high-quality, good-paying jobs essential for a strong economy. The Governor understands that Montanans want energy development that primarily focuses on renewable energy sources and clean technologies that preserve our way of life.

We have the nation's largest reserves of coal, some of its best wind resources, and the capacity for a strong biofuels industry. We have abundant oil, natural gas and coal bed methane opportunities. Montana continues to enhance existing and create new diversified energy development from these resources. Proper development of Montana's

resources can play a vital role in helping the nation meet the target of 25% renewable energy by the year 2025.

This energy development will serve to strengthen and grow Montana's economy. The transmission lines, pipelines, railroads and highways needed to move various energy products to market are vital if Montana is to compete in regional and global markets. More jobs will be created as these projects are simultaneously developed. For more information on Governor Schweitzer's energy development plans, please visit the Governor's Office of Economic Development's energy page at <http://business.mt.gov/govsenergypage.asp> or call 406-444-5634.



Governor Schweitzer incorporated his energy vision for Montana into a successful \$15 million grant program called WIRED with the U.S. Department of Labor to develop a biofuels and bioproduct industry cluster in a 32-county region of central and eastern Montana.

Grant funds have been distributed to four higher education institutions in the region to build upon training programs and develop curriculum to further strengthen this industry. Funding has also been awarded to six business development projects in the region. To learn more about the WIRED strategy, you can go to <http://dli.mt.gov/wired/wired.asp> or call Adam deYong, the project director at 406-444-3662.

These development projects will involve participation from business, government, communities and individuals. Montana needs your help in moving our economy forward. Governor Schweitzer looks forward to working with you as we continue to build communities and increase opportunities for Montana families and businesses.

MTCC VISTA: MONTANA FARMS TO MONTANA MEALS

Author: Dean McGovern, MTCC Executive Director

Remember when 'locally grown' meant literally in your own back yard?

Montana Campus Compact (MTCC), a nonprofit coalition of Montana colleges and universities' teamed up with Grow Montana, a nonprofit coalition of advocates that enable Montana's food producers to meet more of the state's food needs, to ensure that more cafeterias across the state begin thinking of ways to use home grown and produced Montana food.

Today's production-to-consumption has fewer health benefits and higher fuel costs.

Thirty-three million dollars worth of food is consumed in Montana's public institutions, including its universities and schools, annually. Montana farmers produce a large variety of vegetables, fruits, nuts, berries, beans, poultry products, and oilseed, and rank in the top ten states for production of honey, wheat, sheep products, goat products, cattle products, barley, and sugar (USDA, 2005). With this level of agricultural production, many of the products used to make meals in Montana do not need to travel very far at all.

"Strategically placing MTCC VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) members at a few pilot schools and campuses makes a strong launch to the initiative," said Crissie McMullan, coordinator for Grow Montana. "We want to see sustainability long after the VISTA's one year term of service is up." Pilot sites include: Montana State University (MSU) in Bozeman, The University of Montana (UM)-Western in Dillon, Salish Kootenai College (SKC) in Pablo, and at the Missoula County Public School District.

Former Georgia resident Mecca Lowe, MTCC VISTA, (MSU Bozeman) helped develop and host the first Montana Local Food Bazaar & Symposium attracting more than 200 food producers, faculty, students, chefs, farmers, and citizens to the MSU campus to learn about and taste local products. Lowe's student group, Friends of Local Foods, raised nearly \$10,000 to create an organic farm and advocated for reinstatement of an MSU Market Gardening course.

MTCC VISTA Kevin Moore (UM-Western), first realized



On the Farm:
Lauren Caldwell, Kevin Moore, Mecca Lowe, and Ariel Bleth

the significance of food as a child on his grandfather's farm in northern California. His work at UM-Western has dramatically increased the amount of Montana-grown food being used within the campus dining services, including a new contract with Montana Range Brand Beef from Forsyth. Moore has created a comprehensive database of Montana food vendors and flagged all locally-

grown products in the campus' inventory system.

Lauren Caldwell, MTCC VISTA, (SKC), appreciates the myriad connections between social and environmental welfare. Her recipe book **Eat Local, Feel Noble**, published in 2006, provides readers with monthly recipes using locally grown foods in various seasons. In fall 2006, Caldwell helped host a Montana-grown meal on campus for 200 community members including Governor Brian Schweitzer and US Senator-Elect Jon Tester.

Ariel Bleth, MTCC VISTA (Missoula County Public Schools) is applying the Farm to College model to public school cafeterias throughout Missoula County. Bleth has studied and experienced food and food culture in several other countries. She advances the academic and personal health needs of youth in her work while creating an important nexus between growers and consumers.

In the short time since the program began, the MTCC VISTAs have helped improve the lives of family-sized farmers and ranchers as well as the nutrition of students eating in institutional settings on Montana's American Indian reservations and low-income communities. Plans are in the works to grow the program and place more MTCC VISTAs in more communities throughout the state.

To learn more about Grow Montana please visit www.growmontana.ncat.org. For information about Montana Campus Compact's VISTA Program, call (406) 243-5177 or visit www.mtcompact.org.

BIO-PRODUCT INNOVATION CENTERS OFFER ASSISTANCE

Author: Tracy Jette, Bio Product Innovation Centers Network Coordinator



Brett Earl & Logan Fisher

Farmers Brett Earl and Logan Fisher envisioned a business to manufacture biodiesel from oilseeds grown near their hometown of Chester. Earl earned a degree in chemical engineering, while Fisher holds a degree in business administration. Their combination of lifelong HiLine farm experience and advanced education fueled the vision.

"We feel that growing oilseed crops locally, producing biofuel locally and consuming biofuels locally will be a key component to enhance Montana's rural economy and create sustainable jobs," Earl explained.

They approached Bear Paw Development Corporation in Havre for technical assistance. One of four newly created Bio-Product Innovation Centers is housed at Bear Paw, and is poised to increase assistance in the biofuels area. Bear Paw's Brandi Beecher helped develop the Earl-Fisher Bio-Fuels business plan and a funding proposal for the Montana Department of Agriculture's Growth Through Agriculture (GTA) program. GTA provided a deferred-payment loan to purchase equipment.

The center was instrumental in obtaining engineering help from the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center and a grant from the Montana Department of Commerce for workforce training for new employees.

Earl-Fisher Bio-fuels plan to begin production in April 2007 with a 100,000 gallon per year production capacity and eventual plans for 1 million gallons of capacity and 10 full-time employees. "We would not be where we are today without the assistance," Earl said.

Bio-Product Innovation Centers were established by the Montana Department of Agriculture in September 2006, and are co-located with development corporations in Havre, Joliet, Wolf Point and Lewistown.

The bio-centers provide customized training and technical assistance to owners of existing businesses, entrepreneurs evaluating new business opportunities, and cooperatives pursuing bio-product and related value-added agriculture business opportunities.

Assistance provided includes:

- Conducting business feasibility studies, business plans, market research, marketing plans, operating plans, and strategic plans.
- Developing training programs for existing, new, or potential employees.
- Training to educate business professionals and entrepreneurs on industry dynamics and technology of specific bioproduct industries.
- Evaluating existing and developing technologies.

In Roosevelt County, the bio-center in Wolf Point can be reached at (406) 653-2590 or by email at bpic@gndc.org. Other centers in the WIRED region are in: Joliet, (406) 962-3914, cdholt@yahoo.com; Havre, (406) 265-9226, bbeecher@bearpaw.org; and Lewistown, (406) 535-2591, smdcmaic@midrivers.com.



A VIEW FROM THE HI-LINE

Author: Agriculture Director Nancy K. Peterson



Multi-tasking is second nature to farm and ranch families. I was born in Havre, raised on a farm and have worked in agriculture all my life. I also took a part-time job as an Amtrak ticket agent to help give my sons Kody and Kyle choices after high

school. I have been an emergency medical technician and school board director and served in countless other volunteer positions.

Agriculture remains Montana's No. 1 industry, but one doesn't need to look far beyond the empty farmsteads to realize that our rural communities must diversify to survive. That's why I am excited about the WIRED program and the establishment of Bio-Product Innovation Centers in Wolf Point and three other communities. When Governor Brian Schweitzer and I served on the USDA Farm Service Agency State Committee during the 1990s, it was apparent in our visits throughout Montana that new crops and new industries were needed.

When Brian asked me to become the director of the state Department of Agriculture, it was an opportunity to help Montana grow its value-added, agriculture-based economy that excited me most. We all want opportunities for our children and grandchildren to grow up, be educated and find employment in Montana. Without adding value to our raw commodities here in Montana, there is almost no chance that the next generation will be able to stay on the farm or ranch.

As a farm and ranch operator with more than 30 years experience, I have raised livestock, wheat, barley, oats, peas, lentils, canola, chick peas, mustard, flax and safflower. Our farm has cooperated with the Northern Ag Research Center at Havre since the late 1970s on projects including sawfly resistance, pest management and the use of global positioning systems to map protein and nitrogen levels. New crops are like new tools in managing the land and helping to provide a future for our children and grandchildren. Yet, we also need new ways to convert those crops into products that will keep more of the value in Montana, and provide more opportunities for people in communities like Wolf Point, Havre, Gildford and Glendive.

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FARMS TO MEALS & FUELS

PARTNERSHIP

Author: Marissa Kozel



Photo Courtesy of Major Robinson

“What do I see as the biggest asset to the Fort Peck Tribe’s involvement in the Montana Agro-Energy Plan (MAP) WIRED program?” Mark Sansaver questioned himself aloud. “Value added agriculture, the opportunity for tribes to partner with companies and growers off the reservation, and the ability to leverage all our resources with the end result of biofuel.”

Sansaver is the Executive Director of Assiniboine and Sioux Tribal Enterprise Community on the Fort Peck Reservation. He works as a liaison between the tribe and both Fort Peck Community College and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Sansaver’s current focus is a \$150,000 MAP-WIRED grant recently awarded to the college by the Montana Department of Commerce.

The award will be used to provide vocational training in trades over a period of 24 months to support the development of the biofuels industry in Montana. The funding will help leverage nearly \$200,000 the college has previously raised.

“We hope to certify 10 to 20 people in each area: welding, pipefitting, cement finishing and carpentry,” said Sansaver. “We’ve already started coordinating with the tribe and the college apprenticeship programs to see who we should train first.”

Sansaver has a positive outlook on developing a team to further the biofuel industry in northeastern Montana. He believes this project will foster beneficial partnerships for the tribe, and hopes their first partner will be Sustainable Systems in Culbertson.



Photo Courtesy of Billings Gazette



Photo Courtesy of Billings Gazette



Photo Courtesy of Major Robinson

Sustainable Systems LLC has been crushing safflower seed and processing the oil for nearly two years. Company President, Paul Miller, is now looking to expand. He says there's a good possibility his expansion team could come from Ft. Peck College.

"I've been communicating with Fort Peck, and I believe they're a resource to utilize," said Miller.

Miller's \$14 million plant remodel is made possible in part by the MAP-WIRED program. Sustainable Systems was recently awarded a MAP grant of more than \$1.3 million for employee training. Miller expects to add between 16 and 35 full time positions to his staff of 22. The grant will help cover the cost of training existing employees and recent hires on new equipment.

Sustainable Systems currently produces oil for sale into food based markets. The planned expansion will allow the company to shift gears, to increase oil production and sell to the bio-industry.

Eventually, Miller wants to build a biodiesel and crop oil refinery at his current site.

"WIRED is fast tracking the team we need to operate new facilities. Investing in human capital on the fast track is a big part of the puzzle," said Miller. "The grant is positioning Montana to participate in a global economic phenomenon by providing opportunities for additional training in a very exciting field."

Montana's Agro Energy Plan is focused on creating opportunity for the biofuels industry in eastern Montana including six Indian reservations.

Both Governor Schweitzer and Department of Commerce Director Anthony J. Preite believe MAP is a tool that can be used to dramatically increase economic growth in Indian country.

"Leveraging funds is crucial to business and job

development," said Preite. "MAP funds leveraged with other funding sources will result in tremendous economic development opportunities for eastern Montana."

Though the Montana Agro-Energy Plan is in its adolescence, those involved believe it's the spark needed to ignite the fires of prosperity and partnership in the biofuels industry. Some believe Montana's role in energy production has the potential to set the stage for the rest of the country.

"MAP grants are laying the foundation to move the energy effort along, by training people in trades that will help move Montana and the country forward," said James Shanley, President of Fort Peck Community College. "The country is changing and Montana needs to be in the forefront of that change, developing our natural resources and the workforce to support it."

Sansaver says fresh partnerships among the tribes, private industry and the state will open doors to bigger possibilities for everyone.

"I think it's inevitable that we will develop biofuels and renewable energy, but knowing the state and non-tribal partners are behind it, there's a higher probability of success for our local workforce," said Sansaver. "We want to be a prominent partner in making the end product. This partnership will allow us to reach out to non-tribal members in something that is mutually beneficial."

Miller agrees. He says these positive alliances will bolster business on and

off the reservation.

"MAP has allowed us to show state support for a private investment and provided a significant leverage opportunity. By the end of the project we will have leveraged the MAP money 10 to one."

"I hope the MAP-WIRED program has opened more eyes to the opportunity that's in eastern Montana," said Miller.



Photo Courtesy of Fort Peck Community College



Photo Courtesy of Fort Peck Community College



Photo Courtesy of Fort Peck Community College

FOR A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

WIRED WORKING TO MOVE MONTANA FORWARD

Author: Nancy Guccione

"The most dominant need for new or expanding companies is the availability of a trained workforce," said Anthony Preite, Director of the Montana Department of Commerce. "The WIRED program helps prepare our workers, to ensure Montana is first out of the gate in the agro-energy race."

Governor Brian Schweitzer has become a nationally recognized leader in spearheading new and innovative approaches to creating value-added agriculture businesses. With his vision, the State of Montana has made strides in the marathon for agro-energy. In January 2006, Governor Schweitzer was notified by the US Department of Labor that Montana's application, one of only 13 approved out of more than 90 nationwide applicants, would receive a three year, \$15 million dollar grant, to spark the creation of a biolubricant and bioproduct industry.

"We have the potential to be energy and economic development leaders here in Montana," said Gary Morehouse, Commerce Business Resources Division Assistant Administrator. "Many of the producers in the WIRED region are already doing what they do best, they're growing crops. Now we're working to create a value added market where seed and grain become oil and fuel, and the byproducts become a valuable commodity too."

The State of Montana is committed to funding WIRED projects that directly involve job training in bioproduct business development. Projects must prove that they attain tangible, measurable results through the form of job creation and employee retention and have the ability to leverage other funding sources.



Joe Juarez visiting Peaks & Prairies

"Leveraging WIRED funds is the key to fostering agro-energy development," said Preite. "The hope is that we will be able to significantly maximize available funds for job training and creation by leveraging funds from local resources and the private sector."

The minimum WIRED match requirement is one new cash dollar from unexpended grants, loans, and/or new equity for each dollar of WIRED funds requested. The program may consider lower match amounts only in very unique cases where significant need and circumstances warrant additional consideration and are documented by the applicant.

The program has no set funding threshold and is based on an open application cycle. Program staff will determine the amount of WIRED funds that will be granted to an eligible business based on the eligibility of job training costs proposed.

Businesses that are principally engaged in the production of bioproducts in the WIRED region are eligible to apply to the program for job training grants for new and incumbent workers to expand their operations. Projects that create new jobs are the priority focus of the program. In an effort to build a skilled workforce that can support the bioproducts industry, the program will also consider assisting manufacturing and energy related businesses in the defined WIRED region. These projects must create and retain a significant number of jobs, and conduct business activities and manufacture products that are supportive to the development of the bio-products industry in the WIRED region. Funding an application for any project that involves relocation of businesses within Montana to new communities or that creates a significant possibility that jobs may be lost within Montana will not be considered.

WIRED funds can be used to pay for salaries of trainers during training activities. However, salaries of employees during training activities are ineligible for reimbursement.

Tribal governments within the WIRED region may apply for up to \$50,000 in Tribal WIRED funds annually. No match is required for this appropriation, but it is recommended Tribal governments utilize other funds to leverage WIRED awards. Additional funds will allow the Tribes to maximize the impact of WIRED funds.

The Montana Department of Commerce WIRED Program is housed in the Business Resources Division. Nancy Guccione, WIRED Program Manager, is the primary point of contact for grant applications. Eligible applicants are encouraged to work with the Certified Regional Development Corporation (CRDC) and the Commerce Regional Development Officer (RDO) located in the project area.

Additional information including a map of the WIRED region, the formal application and the application guidelines can be accessed on the Montana Department of Commerce's website at http://businessresources.mt.gov/BRD_Wired.asp.



Nancy Guccione,
Commerce WIRED Program Manager



The State of Montana receives 15 million dollar WIRED award

MONTANA'S AGRO-ENERGY PLAN

Author: Adam de Yong

Less than one year ago, Governor Brian Schweitzer held a vial of biodiesel up for Emily Stover DeRocco, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training, and asked that she smell what he dubbed Chanel #21. Schweitzer opened the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) conference by stating that Montana has more potential for energy development from existing and potential new diversified sources than any state in the nation.

Historically, Montana has been a commodity exporting state. In agriculture, forest products and mining, the economic benefits of value-adding, as well as many quality jobs, have gone mostly out-of-state along with the low-priced commodity. WIRED provides an opportunity for Montana to nurture an innovative value-added industry that benefits domestic agriculture and creates globally competitive enterprises, resulting in high paying jobs across our 32 identified rural communities.

Montana's Agro-Energy Plan (MAP) is positioned to boost the bioproducts/bioenergy industry in central and eastern Montana in an effort to reduce the out-migration of the workforce in rural communities, increase the net return and stability of farm income and create an industry that allows us to become competitive in the global market. DeRocco called the plan a force in which Montana can build upon its inherent agriculturally rich economy by advancing renewable resources and developing the region's energy potential.



Governor Schweitzer & Assistant Secretary De Rocco



Products of Sustainable Systems

The United States Department of Labor's (USDOL) National WIRED program acts as the catalyst in bridging the workforce gap created between a state's two tiered workforce development initiatives of education and training and job placement and the one tiered economic development methodology of training as an incentive to attract or retain a business. Thirteen regions, out of 92 applicants, were identified by USDOL as having industry sectors with the greatest potential for long-term sustainable growth. This focused approach will benefit both the workforce development initiatives and the economic development methodology. Workforce development will see an increase in job placement and retention, due to the targeted nature of training and education for the identified industry sector. Economic development will be able to utilize the creation of an industry training platform as a complementary incentive to training dollars.

For Montana, the choice was bioproducts/bioenergy because this industry has the potential to impact a greater portion of Montanans in the region. The producers benefit from the creation of a stable market for alternative crops that are consumed by Montana manufacturers, eliminating the cost of freight paid by producers and effectively dispersing the economic impact throughout the region. This in turn will help stabilize the region's economy and population. Also, the region has key competitive advantages that are essential to grow a sustainable and globally competitive bioproducts/bioenergy sector. Lastly, the development of the bioproducts/bioenergy sector will benefit the job needs of the growing energy sector in Montana by training individuals with basic to intermediate to advanced job skills needed to work at a plant or large scale industrial site.

To bridge the gap between typical workforce development and economic development training, the Montana Department of Labor and Industry has allocated funds to the Department of Commerce, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, and the Department of Agriculture for regranting. Year 1 funding is primarily focused on curriculum development, industry growth, and outreach and education to the region. The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education has granted funds to post-secondary institutions in the region who are working with multiple partners to develop curriculum and career pathways for the bioproducts/bioenergy sector. The Department of Commerce is focusing on industry growth by providing funding directly to companies for employee training. Multiple applications have been received and funds have been approved for projects with expansion plans that will hopefully come to fruition in the near term. The outreach and education piece is being tackled by each department and will be a key area for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination that bring both ends of the workforce development system together.

To learn more about the Montana Agro-Energy Plan program visit www.dli.mt.gov/wired/wired.asp.



From Seed to Shelf

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MAP OF OUR FUTURE

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION OF MONTANA'S WORKFORCE

Author: Darrell Holzer

In 2006, the state received the United States Department of Labor Building Industry Labor Training (BILT) and WIRED grants to promote economic development and meet Montana's anticipated need for 9,560 newly-trained skilled construction workers by 2012. **The Apprenticeship and Training Program** has helped develop first time partnerships between the higher education community and registered apprenticeship programs. This partnership, in tandem with federal funds, has led to new construction related programs such as the plumbing technology and electrical technology programs at Montana State University-Northern (Havre), provided Carpentry BILT grants to eight colleges of technology and community colleges, created one year certificate plumbing and electrical courses at Flathead Valley Community College (Kalispell) and a potential utility lineman school at the College of Technology in Butte.



Lanae Vetsch

Apprenticeship and Training Program Supervisor Mark Maki is pleased but not surprised by all of the attention to rebuilding the state's skilled construction workforce. "The availability of skilled workers has had a difficult time keeping pace with the new residential and retail construction demand we've been experiencing these last couple years," said Maki. "Developing training programs with our two-year schools will allow for a virtually seamless transition into a registered apprenticeship program and enhance our collective abilities to provide an established employer/employee pipeline to meet the state's future skilled workforce needs."

Currently, demand for apprentices in the state continues to grow. To meet the demand and service existing programs, the Montana Apprenticeship and Training Program has five field representatives that provide services to apprentices and their sponsors statewide. A target for sustainable job creation is Eastern Montana. In 2006, 10 year veteran field representative Lanae Vetsch traveled 15,033 miles, registered 121 new apprentices, conducted 248 re-inspection visits, recruited 23 new apprenticeship sponsor programs and participated in four job fairs. According to Vetsch, it's not about how many new apprentices they sign up, it's about how many apprentices successfully complete their training.

To learn more about the Apprenticeship and Training program visit <http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/apprenticeship/apprentice.asp>, or call Mark Maki, 406-444-3556, or email mmaki@mt.gov.

HARVESTING MONTANA'S CREATIVE CROP

Author: Michelle Robinson

"Nearly one-fifth of workers reaching retirement age by 2020, gray hair, white hair or no hair at all define workplaces around the nation," said keynote speaker Rebecca Ryan, economist, founder and owner of Next Generation Consulting at the Connecting Generations Workshop in Great Falls and Flathead.



Michelle Robinson

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projected that in 2006, two workers would leave the workforce for every one entering and by 2010 there will be a shortage of 10.3 million workers across all employment categories.

How will Montana engage young talent? Next Generation recommends each community or company take an inventory. Ask yourself: Is my neighborhood vibrant and energized? Do we have a network for young people to connect to one another? Next, assess your place of business. Is it what Ryan dubs "PMS" - Pale, Male and Stale? If a Gen X'er applies for a job, will they see another worker that looks like them? Does your business offer incentives, enrichment, and encouragement for team involvement? What is your level of civic engagement?

Twenty-six year old professional Kate Downen departed city life for rural living in Flathead County. "A lot of people my age are married and happily involved in their own families and working lives," she said. "I'm still itching for new things, people, stuff to do, music, places to go, and new ideas."

According to Ryan, 56% of all computer programmers are Generation X'ers. Our fathers' economy of goods and services (aka manufacturing) has shifted to an innovative economy that relies on knowledge-based workers. "Remember in this struggle to win the talent war," proclaims Ryan, "a number one deal breaker is, can employees have both a life and a career."

Simply put, it's supply and demand. Ryan claims that three out of four young professionals under the age of 28 place more importance on the quality of the community than the availability of jobs. Workforce development is no longer the responsibility of one organization or governmental agency. The workforce dilemma demands strong partnerships. Montana communities and companies that recognize the value of these relationships will sustain the promise of the future.

To learn more about Next Generation Consulting, visit www.nextgenerationconsulting.com.

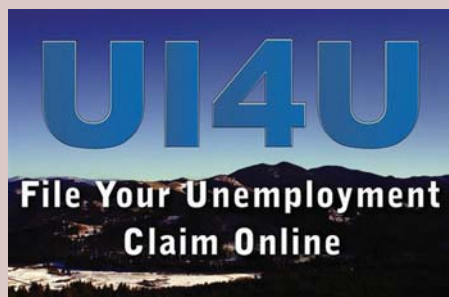
SEVENTY YEARS OF SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES

Seventy years ago the nation was in the midst of the longest and most severe depression ever experienced by the industrialized Western world with a rate of unemployment at nearly 25%. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act of 1935 establishing the Unemployment Insurance Program "... which provides partial compensation for wage loss as a matter of right, with dignity, and dispatch, to eligible individuals ...".

Governor Roy Ayers signed the Montana's Unemployment Insurance (UI) program into law on March 16, 1937. At that time, all employers with eight or more employees contributed 3.2% of their total gross wages to finance the program. The maximum weekly benefit amount was \$15 for up to 16 weeks. Unemployed workers waited in long lines to file their unemployment claims.

Today, employer contributions are computed on a sliding scale based on "experience ratings." Contribution rates range from 0% to 9.56%. The maximum weekly benefit amount is \$362 for up to 28 weeks. No longer are there long waiting lines for unemployed workers. Workers may file claims by telephone or using the Internet at www.UI4U.mt.gov, and employers may report wages through WARP on the Web at <http://uid.dli.mt.gov/warp/warpromo.asp> and soon may register with UI through the Internet.

Unemployment Insurance continues to serve unemployed Montanans by providing short term economic relief using technologically advanced systems. In keeping with President Roosevelt's vision, UI has indeed built a system of unemployment insurance to establish a new security in the life of the wage earner and family.



BIO PRODUCT COUNSELING SERVICES

Author: Linda Twitchell

The Great Northern Development Corporation (GNDC) located in the northeastern corner of Montana provides Bio Product Counseling Services within the WIRED region and is a recent award recipient of WIRED funds through the Montana



Jeanna Adkins

State Department of Agriculture. Individual consultations, special purpose workshops and educational forums will highlight the year as the GNDC focuses on adding value to raw agricultural products and providing opportunities.

Jeanna Adkins joined GNDC in January and serves as the Bio Product Innovation Center (BPIC) Director in Roosevelt County and the surrounding area. Adkins, raised in the Bainville area, realizes partnerships are critical to a program's success or failure. According to Adkins, "Coordination of existing resources improves the efficiencies of the program. Building rapport with such entities as the Northeast Montana Job Service Workforce Centers in Glasgow and Wolf Point only enhances the potential to magnify our deliverable."

Adkins attended the "Harvesting Clean Energy" workshop in Boise, Idaho in January and will speak about the BPIC program in Plentywood at Ag Days on March 16.

Adkins resides on a ranch near Nashua with her husband and two children. She has a stake in the future of northeastern Montana and has jumped into the position by attending local value added meetings and regional conferences. For those interested in exploring the opportunities, please contact the Great Northern Development Corporation at 653-2590 or e-mail bpic@gndc.org.

TOP 10 PRIVATE EMPLOYERS

Albertsons



Northeast Montana Health Services
(Trinity Hospital, Poplar Hospital, Faith Lutheran Home)



Associated Cleaning Supply



Roosevelt Memorial Medical Center



Agland Cooperative



McDonald's



The Sherman Inn



Buckhorn Bar and Café



ROOSEVELT AT A GLIMPSE

Author: Brad Eldredge

Total population: 10,524
(Census, 2005)

Median age: 33.2 (Census, 2005)

Median household income:
\$27,067 (Census, 2004)

Average unemployment rate: 6.4%
(BLS LAUS estimate, 2005)

Top five industries in terms of employment:

- 1) Executive, Legislative, and
Other General Government
Support
- 2) Educational Services
- 3) Hospitals
- 4) Food Services and Drinking
Places
- 5) Gasoline Stations

For information on employment
by industry, new businesses, labor
market information, job projections,
and hourly pay by occupation visit
www.ourfactsyourfuture.org.

Or call the Montana Department of
Labor and Industry's Research and
Analysis Bureau (406) 444-2638,
or mail: P.O. Box 1728, Helena, MT
59624.

IN ROOSEVELT COUNTY

**This list includes only private industry employers subject to Unemployment Insurance. Railroads and city, county, state and federal government agencies (including public school districts and universities) are excluded.*

TOP 10 PRIVATE EMPLOYERS IN ROOSEVELT COUNTY

Agland

What began as Farmers Union Oil in 1932, retailing fuels, motor oil and mechanical repairs for the Wolf Point farming community, has blossomed into **Agland Cooperative**. Through mergers and acquisitions Agland maintains home base in Wolf Point, but also set up shops in Nashua, Vida, Poplar and Froid. Their goods and services expanded to include bulk and applied fertilizer, seed and chemical pesticides.

"We have a strong history of providing goods and services at a fair and equitable price," said General Manager Tom Dahl. "We maintain that mission today by serving our customers with the products they need to harvest plentiful crops." Dahl clarified that over the past 10 years, Agland has seen the farming community mature and become more globally competitive. "Fertilizer and pesticide applications are to crop production what irrigation was to dryland farming – a big shot in the arm that has producers yielding better returns."

Dahl, who grew up right across the border in northwest North Dakota, is researching apprenticeship programs with Williston State College School of Agriculture and others to recruit a potential workforce. "We're offering competitive pay, career growth opportunities, and the ability to live in or near your hometown," states Dahl. Nearly 70 employees are on the Agland payroll putting money back into the local community, but as Dahl reiterates, there is always room for more. "As demands increase and the labor pool dwindles, we've got to entice more students to pursue agronomy."

Albertsons

"Joe Albertson believed customers should be treated with 'lots of tender, loving care.' He knew that if it weren't for the customers, we wouldn't be in business," relayed Wolf Point Store Director Gene Pronto. **Albertsons** has come a long way from its originator's first store in 1939 Boise, with 2005 annual revenues of more than \$35 billion, 230,000 employees and stores across 37 states.

In June 2006, Albertsons was purchased by SuperValu, who has provided more than 135 years of leadership and innovation in the grocery retail industry. With the acquisition, Albertsons was propelled to the position of third largest grocery retailer in the US, hosting 2,500 retail locations and nearly 200,000 employees. The pairing brought out the best in both entities - Albertsons' dedicated human capital, such as Wolf Point's 30 year service providers Roger Hunsely and Eileen Atwood (pictured), and SuperValu's unparalleled distribution know-how from extreme value stores to full-service supermarkets.

Albertsons stores in Montana are part of the Retail West Operating Area, which includes much of the western United States. "We're the only large grocery store serving Roosevelt County and the Fort Peck Indian reservation," said Pronto, who oversees nearly 50 employees. "Locals have come to count on the Albertsons experience for more than 40 years. We don't just work here. We live and are invested in our community."

Associated Cleaning Supply

Educator Ed Hennessey relocated to Montana from Chicago in the 1970's in large part due to his Jehovah's ministry. However, as a teacher and coach he found that he had very little time to devote to his primary reason for moving. In 1980, Hennessey launched **Associated Cleaning Supply**, offering residential and commercial cleaning from standard janitorial services to fire, water and mold restoration. By creating a flexible work schedule, Hennessey found balance between his business and his faith.

Hennessey might be the only business in a town of 2,700 people, but his 30 person crew has an outreach of more than 1,000 residential and 30 commercial contracts putting nearly 8,000 miles on his service vehicles monthly. "We keep our employees well trained and educated about technological advancements in cleaning and restorative processes," said Hennessey. "We give them the best equipment to accomplish the work at hand and when we don't have enough hands, we hire more."

One such instance was a mold remediation project at Scobey Elementary, recalls Hennessey. The project was so extensive that Hennessey found himself hiring nearly 30 educators, community members and students to assist with the smaller details of scrubbing and sanitizing books, desks and other classroom materials after trained restorators removed and replaced lumber, sheetrock and windows. "In this instance, as with others, we not only restore a building --- we restore hope."

Buckhorn Bar & Café

Owners Frank and Mertice Marottek with son, Charles, purchased the historic Buckhorn Billiards Hall & Bar in 1970, a popular parlor that once hosted Lawrence Welk, and leveled the building to construct a new facility in 1974. The **Buckhorn Bar and Café**, a family corporation, offered gaming and homemade nibblers of burgers, pizza and fried chicken in their modest kitchen, but by the early 80's their dining area was unable to keep up with local demands.

"The need for food was immense," said Mertice as she arrived before the lunch rush to see her staff filling the pool table with take out boxes. In 1984, the Marotteks expanded the dining area to comfortably seat 110 in the Bar & Café in the heart of Poplar. Today the Buckhorn is open 7 days a week, from 6am-11pm. Nineteen full time and 7 part time staff serve breakfast, lunch and dinner, along with a small banquet room and gaming machines.

Due to the demands of feeding the lunch rush, no alcohol is served before 1:00 and as many as seven employees are on the floor to accommodate the orders. "Most locals only have 30 minutes for lunch, so the majority call ahead to have their food waiting for them or order take out," said Mertice, who maintains 17 different food accounts with the Fort Peck Tribe, Fort Peck Community College and Bureau of Indian Affairs. "Our locals tell us what they want and we accommodate. Every Friday you'll find beef stew, fry bread, and Indian tacos on the menu. It's what our community has come to count on."



McDonald's

Kerry Hanks is putting her "Hamburgerology" degree from McDonald's Hamburger University to good use, as the owner and operator of **McDonald's** in Wolf Point.

Located on the Fort Peck Reservation, this business has been serving the community for over a decade. "We're the only fast-food restaurant within 50 miles, and that allows our crew to build unique relationships with customers," said Hanks. The restaurant employs about 35 workers, but when hot summer sun brings in crowds, the team can climb to 45. "We've sold up to 600 double cheeseburgers in one day and sometimes it can be challenging, but we've got a great crew and always receive the highest scores for timeliness and hospitality," said Hanks.

From the newly remodeled interior featuring tribal and western artwork, to the coffee mugs for morning regulars, this restaurant boasts a big name, but still embraces its "small town" roots.

Northeast Montana Health Services

Northeast Montana Health Services (NEMHS) has been providing quality healthcare to the people of rural Northeast Montana for over a decade. "We take pride in the fact that we are a highly trained team, offering an extensive array of health services," NEMHS Public Relations Director Tina Strauser said. NEMHS owns and operates five facilities in Roosevelt County. **Trinity Hospital, Poplar Hospital and Faith Lutheran Home** are three of the Top 10 Private Employers in the area, employing nearly 250 people. NEMHS also operates the Listerud Rural Health Clinic in Wolf Point and the Riverside Clinic in Poplar.

The Wolf Point Campus is home to Trinity Hospital, the Faith Lutheran Home and the Listerud Rural Health Clinic. Trinity Hospital is a full scale facility featuring 24-hour emergency and ambulance services, in-and-out patient surgery, radiology services, laboratory testing, out-patient chemotherapy, cardiac testing, obstetrics, and out-patient infusion therapy.

Faith Lutheran Home is also located on the Wolf Point campus and has been providing unsurpassed care to seniors since 1962. The facility offers a 60-bed long term care facility, 25 retirement apartments, elderly day care services, and an Alzheimer unit.

Listerud Rural Health Clinic is a family clinic offering family health care, geriatric evaluations, obstetrics/newborn health care, and "Well Women" care.

The Poplar Campus is home to Poplar Hospital and the Riverside Clinic.

Poplar Hospital offers 24-hour emergency and ambulance services, radiology services, physical therapy, cardiac rehabilitation, laboratory testing, and tele-medicine.

The Riverside Clinic offers family healthcare, "Well Child" immunization, and "Well Women" care.

Strauser says NEMHS is dedicated to delivering the finest healthcare, and that commitment is evident in the additional services they provide. NEMHS serves patients by offering tele-

medicine, EMT training and Stat Air-Service for patients in need of immediate care. "We work hard to provide the best care possible in our rural setting, and that means going above and beyond to provide services that fit our patients and our area."

Roosevelt Memorial Medical Center

"Personalized care is important to us at **Roosevelt Memorial Medical Center**," Marketing and Public Relations Director Chris Traeger said. "The size of our facility and our amazingly compassionate staff means more direct patient care. We truly care about our patients and we treat them like family."

Roosevelt Memorial Medical Center & Nursing Home has been serving Culbertson and its surrounding areas since 1977. The Center is Culbertson's largest private employer with nearly 75 people on staff, and features a critical access hospital, nursing home and Alzheimer's unit. The Center also operates a Rural Health Clinic, staffed by one Doctor and two Physicians Assistants.

"We're in the process of updating our Radiology Department, and we're really excited about the new services we have to offer," exclaims Traeger. Roosevelt's Radiology Department now includes a digital radiology system, and a cutting edge computed radiology system will be operational this spring. These systems will allow Radiologists to take clearer, more accurate digital images and send them to Radiologists at other facilities. The Center also has telehealth and telemedicine capabilities, which allow doctors to treat patients at a distance, and consult with other medical professionals.

The Sherman Inn

Whether you're looking for a good meal, a comfortable place to stay the night, or a good dose of town gossip, you'll find it at the **Sherman Inn** in Wolf Point. "We're the hub of town," said Owner and General Manager Sean-Paul Schulte. "We are a full-service hotel with a great restaurant, an exciting lounge and casino and complete banquet facilities. So, we can pour you a cup of coffee, or host your wedding. We do it all."

The nearly century old Inn features a newly remodeled restaurant with complete breakfast, lunch and dinner menus. A beautiful hand-laid stone fireplace and hand-made wooden booths accent the dining area. The lounge is equipped with a full bar, televisions for sports fans, and a selection of state of the art casino machines.

The Sherman Inn is a full-service, 46 room hotel with 42 employees. They offer single and double rooms, with reasonable rates ranging from \$50 to \$80 a night.

Wolf Point is known for real-life cowboys and Indians, river views over Lewis and Clark country, great fishing and spectacular pheasant hunting. The Sherman Inn's doors are open to "one and all" and sportsmen and their trusted canine companions can always find a little creature comfort after a long day on the range.

WE ARE MONTANANS REFLECTIONS



Dore Schwinden

My grandparents, Jim and Mary Schwinden and Nels and Amanda Christianson, homesteaded within five miles of each other north of Wolf Point on Tule Creek. Until the war years, dry land farming on the prairie was a subsistence business. My grandparents raised gardens and livestock, blasted and dug coal from the river breaks and sold their surplus of butter, cream, coal and horseradish in town on Saturdays. They tilled, seeded and harvested with teams of horses and lug tractors, turned on lights and pumped water with wind power, heated their homes by burning coal. In nearly every respect, they were sustained by the land, their families and their community.

I was born and raised in Wolf Point. My parents, Jean Christianson and Ted Schwinden, met 75 years ago in a one-room schoolhouse and wed 15 years later. Farming and rural life had changed dramatically by the time my folks returned from the military and nurse's training to farm in 1950. Electricity came in on line, tractors and combines replaced most of the livestock and gardens became a pastime instead of necessity. Wind chargers were more likely to carry a television antenna than pump stock water. The cash grain crop became the economic staple of our family and our neighbors since power, fuel, heat and food had become imported, cash commodities.



Jim Schwinden on the family farm

In many ways the importance of community and a strong interest in Montana's future inevitably led to my dad's career in public service. Whether in the state legislature, Commissioner of State Lands, Lt. Governor or Governor, his goal was to make Montana a better place for his kids and the generations to come. It was only natural that I would find myself following in his footsteps. I returned after school to serve in the Legislature and work the family farm for the next two decades. The farm provided a safe haven for raising my son Nick, despite drought in the 80's and hail in the 90's. When my Mom and Dad retired, once again three generations worked together at harvest time to bring in the crop. Family, a sense of place and public service has been a consistent thread woven in the Schwinden heritage.



Three Generations of Schwindens

It was a privilege to be elected to represent northeastern Montana in the Legislature. I learned that families across the state faced a similar struggle against an economic tide beyond their ability to control. Just like the Dust Bowl of the 30's, many of our neighbors were forced to abandon their homes and dreams to survive. I'm proud to have a role now in Governor Schweitzer's bold vision of energy independence, clean coal liquification, bio fuel development coupled with sustainable agriculture and a helping hand to the last and the least, giving Montana another opportunity to revitalize our rural communities. Today, Montana

is not only open for business, it's open to the possibility for our kids and grandkids to return to family farms in thriving communities where work, family and neighbors can succeed in a place called home.

HARVESTING THE RICHNESS OF ROOSEVELT

Author: Susan Ockert, CEIC Economist



“Look up! The wide extended plain is billowy with its ripened grain, and on the summer winds are rolled its waves of emerald and gold.” - William Henry Burleigh

Nineteenth century journalist and poet William Henry Burleigh could have easily been describing the splendor of Northeastern Montana, in this quote taken from his work, *The Harvest Call*.

Montana's native people appreciated the golden prairies of Northeastern Montana long before the borders of Roosevelt County were drawn or manifest destiny policy sent white men through. The American Indian legacy reveres the symbiotic relationship between Montana's native people and the land they inhabited.

This partnership has been cultivated over the centuries and continues evolving today.

According to Tiller's Guide to Indian Country, American Indians, primarily the Assiniboine Tribe, thrived in the area now known as Roosevelt County.

As westward expansion swept through the United States, the U.S government established reservations across the country. In 1871, an Executive Order established the Fort Peck Reservation. Both

Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes settled on the reservation, and the town of Poplar became tribal headquarters.

In 1919, Roosevelt County was carved from Sheridan County and named after President Theodore Roosevelt. The community of Wolf Point became the county seat. Wolf Point was a popular trading post and had been a refueling stop for steamboats well before Roosevelt County became a county.

Roosevelt County encompasses more than 2,300 square miles, and the Fort Peck Reservation covers 74 percent of the county. According to Tiller's Guide to Indian Country, the tribe owns less than half of the acreage. Non-Indians, such as the

Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service and private individuals own the rest of the reservation acreage.

Indigenous crops like flax and safflower have a long history on the rolling prairies of northeastern Montana. The connection between Montana's first people and Montana's oldest crops was documented by the Lewis and Clark Expedition in the early 1800s. Lewis specifically mentioned blue flax, and its usefulness among the American Indians. "Native Americans wove the tough stem into fishing nets, ropes and other cordage," Lewis noted in his journal.

The safflower plant also has strong historical ties to the Tribes of Montana. Safflower has been referred to as "one of

humanity's oldest crops," by the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute. Tribes in Montana collected the safflower petals to create a soothing medicinal tea, and leaves were harvested to make a variety of textile dyes.

Two centuries later, both flax and safflower are grown commercially in Roosevelt County. Both crops are now gaining popularity due to their use in the biofuels industry. According to the



Typical Threshing Rig (1915 - 1920), Photo courtesy of Marvin Presser

Agricultural Marketing Policy Center, flax and safflower were Montana's top two oilseed crops in 2005. Currently 12 percent of Montana flax and 4.3 percent of Montana safflower is grown in Roosevelt County.

Flax and safflower seeds are becoming a hot commodity in the renewable energy industry. Oil from both plants can be used to produce clean-burning biodiesel. The U.S. Department of Agriculture promotes biodiesel as a biodegradable, nontoxic fuel alternative, which will reduce pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions. Their production on one of Montana's reservations is a particularly appropriate connection to history.

To learn more about the history of Wolf Point contact author, Marvin Presser at 1-800-733-1310, to order your copy of ***Wolf Point A City of Destiny***.

FUEL OF POSSIBILITY

Author: Marissa Kozel

At first glance, Haylee Folkvord seems like any other fourteen year old girl: shopping, playing basketball and hanging out with her friends. So why does Haylee stand out? She makes biofuel in her parents' garage...for fun.

A colleague mentioned Haylee's story to me while we were discussing the youth-driven momentum behind the biofuels industry. He said he'd met her at an oilseed and biodiesel workshop in Livingston. Haylee was the only kid there. He was startled at her interest in oilseed crushing.

Intrigued, I decided to meet this girl and figure out why she found biofuels so fascinating. Within days, I found myself driving to meet Haylee at the Folkvord family home in Three Forks.

When I arrived, Haylee's dad Dean answered the door and showed me into the kitchen, where I found an array of liquid-filled mason jars lining the counter. Every jar was half filled with what looked like a variety of cooking oils. Each was labeled with names like "olive" and "canola." Minutes later, Haylee came bounding down the stairs. She was charming, bright and very eager to tell me about her collection of glistening homemade concoctions.

"This is my project for the Montana Science Fair," she said. "My dad and I mix different oils, lye and methanol in a blender type machine and let it set for one to two hours, and this is what we get." As she held up a large jar of light green liquid, inscribed were the words, "olive" under her candy-pink fingernails.

Haylee then explains how her project works. "Each jar will be filled with a smaller amount of biofuel and every jar will have a wick in it. I'll be burning the wicks to see which type of fuel burns the longest, and that will prove which fuel would provide the most miles per gallon. I'll be burning regular diesel as the control."

She has her money on the fuel made from corn. "I hope it will burn for five minutes," she said.

For the last two years Haylee has placed in her local fair, and qualified for both the regional and the state competition sponsored by the University of Montana. She's determined to make it to state in Missoula again this year. She thinks a biofuels project will make her a stand-out among the short-term memory tests and solar power exhibits.

"Hopefully, my chances are good," she said. "I haven't heard of an experiment like this before, I think it's original."

Haylee further exercised her scientific prowess by explaining the social implications of her project. "I think biodiesel could be really good for our economy if a lot of people start using it in their cars and trucks, and then we wouldn't be so dependent on foreign countries," she said. "People can really use biodiesel, and it would probably be better for the environment."



Haylee's Jars of Biofuel

can develop crops like canola and camelina. I'd like to know how we can play a leadership role in the future."

Curious about Haylee's interest in science, I ask her where she thinks she'll be in ten years. Haylee pauses, and Dean quickly quips "She'll be working in the bakery, or as the family consultant, teaching the farm about biodiesel."

From behind the row of greenish tinted biodiesel, Haylee smiles and rolls her eyes. "I think science would be fun to pursue, because I like finding out things that people don't know yet."

She smiles at her dad again, and follows up with the perfect teenage response: "But I don't really want to work in the bakery."



Haylee Folkvord

Haylee's dad Dean agrees. Though his research is formative, he's considering integrating biofuels into the family business.

The Folkvords are the force behind the well known Wheat Montana Farms and Bakery. The family has been involved in agriculture for three generations, but it was their efforts in the early 90's that developed Wheat Montana into the business we know today. From their 12,000 acres of farm land, the family processes enough wheat to satisfy a nationwide market. Their bakeries supply a five state area, and the brand can be found on flour, cereal and grain across America.

"If America is moving toward energy independence, it will be interesting to see how agriculture fits into that equation," Dean said. "Fortunately we

MADE IN MONTANA

Authors: Lonie Stimac & Sarah Raz

Wolf Point...birthplace of Made in Montana?

Well, not quite, but it is the birthplace of former Governor Ted Schwinden, and it was under his direction that the *Made in Montana/Grown in Montana* marketing program was created in 1984.

For nearly two decades the program flourished, helping consumers identify authentic Montana products, while at the same time creating a value-added industry in the state. This value-added climate allowed consumers, when buying local, to nurture the businesses that played an integral role in Montana's economic well being.

Unfortunately Made in Montana suffered a severe setback in 2003, when the Legislature suspended funding for the popular program. However, Made in Montana is now enjoying resurgence thanks to the Schweitzer/Bohlinger administration, when they restored and expanded the program in 2005.

Today the program has its sights set on marketing Montana in the global economy. Made in Montana is now focused on product development and targeted marketing to help Montana businesses become competitive in the national and world-wide markets.

The program still uses the recognizable Made in Montana/Grown in Montana labels, but has broadened to incorporate a dedicated advertising/promotional campaign. Promotion includes a statewide billboard campaign, holiday commercials with Governor Schweitzer and his faithful dog Jag, and a searchable Online Products Directory formatted to allow both in-state and out-of-state shoppers to quickly locate Made in Montana products (www.madeinmontanausa.com).

The marketing program was also developed to provide both technical and monetary assistance to qualified Montana companies attending wholesale tradeshows outside of Montana.

Eastern Montana continues to generate many creative, valuable entrepreneurs. Two such examples are The Prairie Elk Studio south of Wolf



Lonie Stimac & Sarah Raz

Point, and Whoopup Creek Luffas near Glendive. Classically trained artist Lindy Wright, with The Prairie Elk Studio, creates earthenware pottery pieces by hand, then hand paints and fires each model to a glasslike perfection. Her works of art are both beautiful and functional. Each original piece captures the warmth and brilliance of Italian-inspired majolica pottery. Lindy Wright's exquisitely crafted and painted plates, vases,

bowls, and pitchers enjoy a dedicated following.

Whoopup Creek Luffas, located on the family farm, is owned by Allen and Amy Deines. It is here you will find luffa sponges: gourds that, when peeled and dried, can be used to clean and exfoliate your skin, beside the crops of pinto beans, sugar beets, and feed corn. Martha Stewart Living magazine and website featured their unique creation of luffas embedded with handmade soap as a personal care gift item. The Deines draw their inspiration from the beauty of the countryside around them to create a full line of natural luffa products, ranging from Luffa Bath Salts to Luffa Lollies.



Made in Montana Luffawhips

The Made in Montana/Grown in Montana program may have expanded since its inception under Schwinden, but its purpose remains the same. Small businesses and independent producers are a vital part of Montana living, both economically and culturally. The unique, authentic products they create are worthy of celebration and recognition.

Although Commerce no longer physically arranges the Made in Montana Marketplace and Tradeshow, it continues to provide sponsorship to the City of Great Falls for this much anticipated annual event. Mark your calendars to attend and purchase Made in Montana products on March 2 and 3.

Contact Sarah Raz at the Montana Department of Commerce for additional information, 406-841-2757, sraz@mt.gov, or visit www.madeinmontanausa.com.

THE DOLLARS AND SENSE OF SAFETY

Author: Chris Catlett

It is hard, if not impossible, to attend a business meeting without discussion turning to workers' compensation rates in Montana. What is often missing, however, is the critical relationship between safety and insurance premiums. A recent study entitled *Workers' Compensation in Montana: An Administrative Inventory* (WCRI, 2006), highlighted safety and injury prevention as the number one issue for controlling our state's workers' compensation premiums. While protecting our most valuable resource – Montana's workers – is the primary reason for health and safety programs, it is still beneficial to look at the economics of safety to justify investment in safety systems. Let's briefly explore Montana's injury rates, the business case for safety, elements of a strong safety culture, local success stories and resources available to improve safety in Montana's workplaces.

The most recent (2005) injury rate numbers published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics demonstrate that Montana's lost-time injury rate is approximately 57% higher than the national average for private industry. This difference becomes more pronounced in a few industry categories as shown in Table 1. While the reasons for the higher rates are subject to debate, we have a great opportunity to improve our safety record and to dramatically impact our economic bottom line.

In fact, the reasons for improving our safety programs and our injury rates go far beyond workers' compensation costs. The direct costs of occupational injuries, such as medical bills and insurance costs, pale in comparison to the indirect costs. According to OSHA's Business Case for Safety presentation, some of the indirect costs commonly associated with injuries include time lost from work for the injured employee, loss of efficiency due to break-up of a crew, lost time by the supervisor, costs to rehire and/or retrain, damage to tools and equipment, loss of production, and failure to meet deadlines. More important, however, are the unknown costs



Governor Schweitzer with NewMech Companies Inc.'s Britin Lindberg

Table 1: Incidence rates of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses by industry type (BLS 2006).

Industry	Cases with days away		% Higher in Montana
	Montana	US	
Private Industry	2.2	1.4	57.1
Natural resources and mining	3.6	1.8	100.0
Mining	3.1	1.5	106.7
Construction	5.1	2.4	112.5
Residential building construction	11.1	2.4	362.5
Manufacturing	3.7	1.5	146.7
Trade, transportation and utilities	2.0	1.7	17.6
Retail trade	1.7	1.5	13.3
Information	1.5	0.7	114.3
Financial activities	0.6	0.5	20
Finance and insurance	0.5	0.3	66.7
Professional and business services	1.2	0.7	71.4
Health care and social assistance	2.0	1.6	25.0
Leisure and hospitality	1.4	1.1	27.3

Table 2: Eye Injury Cost Example

Item	Cost
Direct cost	\$10,000
Indirect cost (3x direct)	\$30,000
Total	\$40,000
Company profit margin	5.0%
Added revenue required to recover cost	\$800,000

of human tragedy, lower morale, and damage to a company's reputation.

The ability to avoid these costs often boils down to strong safety culture. For example, as stated in "Safety Doesn't Cost: It Pays," the Kimberly-Clark Corporation highlights how having a safety program and enforcing the use of a \$5 dollar pair of safety glasses helps avoid a preventable eye injury that could require over three-quarters of a million dollars in revenue to recover its cost (see Table 2). Furthermore, OSHA's article "Safety and Health Add Value," states that establishing safety and health management systems

can reduce overall company injury rates by an estimated 20 – 40%. Clearly, the savings can be substantial.

The very cornerstone of workplace safety and health excellence is a strong safety culture. This means that safety is a value, rather than a shifting priority in that workers and managers cooperate to build a safe workplace. Safety culture is often exemplified by strong health and safety management systems with the following attributes as listed by The Business Case for Safety: a clear health and safety policy statement; an assumption that all incidents are preventable and that all risks are manageable; a clear sense of management commitment and employee involvement; an excellent training program, promotion of off-the-job safety, and a mechanism for self-evaluation and improvement.



Governor Schweitzer with City of Helena's Katherine Swindle

Many local Montana companies have experienced the benefits of developing and nurturing a solid safety culture. These companies can point to cost savings, higher morale, and, in many cases, to business process improvements that benefit both the company and its workers. In many cases, these companies have earned additional recognition and publicity by receiving the Governor's Award for Safety and Health. This past year, **Simms Fishing Products** in



Dore Schwinden with Blackfoot Telecommunications Group's Laura Marshal

Bozeman, **NewMech Companies** in Helena, the **Spring Creek Mine** in Decker, **Ironwood Manufacturing** in Missoula and **Blackfoot Telecommunications Group** in Missoula were the award recipients. All of these companies share a passion for safety and realize its link to productivity and business excellence.

If you would like to improve safety and health within your company, there are many resources available to help you get started. Some of these resources include the Montana Chamber of Commerce, workers' compensation insurance carriers, trade or business associations, labor unions, OSHA, and the Department of Labor & Industry Safety Bureau. Investing in a safety culture makes good sense. Learn how you can start now by contacting the Safety Bureau at 444-6401 or visit www.montanafety.com.



Dore Schwinden with Simms Fishing Products

WHAT INVESTIGATORS WANT TO KNOW

Author: Mary Tapper

The Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Human Rights Bureau is a neutral administrative agency charged with enforcing the nondiscrimination laws of Montana. The Bureau accepts and investigates nearly 500 discrimination complaints per year.

The person filing a complaint is referred to as the "charging party". The business or entity against whom the complaint is filed is called the "respondent". In the event you file or respond to a complaint, here are some helpful tips to keep in mind:

- 1. Consider Mediation.** Before the investigation, consider mediation. This allows for prompt resolution of the complaint, saving time and money for employees and employers. There is no cost to either party for mediation. No attorney is required for participation in mediation.
- 2. Be responsive.** State what happened. Give the investigator enough information to understand the facts in contention. Provide the names of witnesses and witness statements early in the investigation when they are requested. With this information, the investigator can determine which witnesses have relevant information, who should be interviewed and then identify additional persons who may have information pertinent to the investigation.
- 3. Be flexible.** By law, the Human Rights Bureau has 180 days to investigate a complaint of discrimination before preparing the final investigative report. Given the caseload each investigator handles, it is often not possible to plan interviews months in advance. Schedules are often difficult to coordinate, and cooperation is appreciated by investigators in both scheduling interviews and receiving responses to document requests in a timely fashion.
- 4. Inquire.** Good communication is key to a thorough investigation. If you have concerns about what is requested or how to respond, or need an extension of time to prepare your response, call the investigator and ask.

The Human Rights Bureau attempts resolution of every case and conducts impartial investigations and issues determinations on the merits of the case. For additional information, including a process flow chart, training materials and timeline please visit www.montanadiscrimination.com.



HUMAN RIGHTS: A LAYERED FAIR AND OBJECTIVE PROCESS

Author: Marieke Beck

Navigating through the administrative process for a discrimination complaint can be complicated. The jargon is unfamiliar and there are three possible layers of review: the Human Rights Bureau, the Hearings Bureau and the Human Rights Commission. People often ask, why three levels? The quick answer is that the legislature wanted a fair and objective process. Multiple layers provide "checks and balances." Each level performs a separate and distinct function.

When first filed, a complaint is informally investigated by the **Human Rights Bureau** (HRB). An HRB investigator will talk to witnesses and gather information to determine if there is merit to a complaint. If HRB finds merit, the complaint will be kept inside the Department's administrative process. If HRB determines there is no merit, the complaint will be dismissed and a charging party can take his or her complaint into district court.

In cases where HRB finds merit, the complaint will travel on to the **Hearings Bureau**. At the hearings level, a Hearing Officer will conduct a contested-case proceeding. The parties will have a chance to conduct

formal discovery, file motions, and present testimony. After the hearing, the Hearing Officer issues a ruling on whether there has been discrimination and, if appropriate, will order relief.

If a party is dissatisfied with either a decision of the Hearing Officer or with the Human Rights Bureau decision to dismiss the complaint, a party can appeal to the last layer of review, the **Human Rights Commission** (HRC), a five-member citizen panel appointed by the Governor. As the final step in the process, HRC reviews agency action and issues decisions. When HRC issues a Final Agency Decision, it can be appealed to a district court.

For more information please contact the Human Rights Bureau at 1-800-542-0807 or visit our website at <http://www.montanadiscrimination.com>.

EDUCATORS GET WIRED

Author: Dr. David Hall, Grant Manager



The Montana University System's Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education selected four post-secondary institutions to receive funding under Montana's Agro-Energy Plan: Workforce Innovation and Regional Economic Development (MAP-WIRED). The successful institutions include Fort Peck Community College, Poplar; Miles Community College, Miles City; Dawson Community College, Glendive; and MSU-Northern, Havre.

Fort Peck Community College will provide **Entrepreneur Education for Successful Bio-Energy Production** in the MAP-WIRED region. The project facilitates the transfer of information and training for entrepreneurs considering bio-energy based enterprises. This service will overcome a significant barrier to the ability of agricultural producers, cooperatives and other businesses to evaluate and capitalize on their potential strengths in this industry.

Dawson Community College partners with Montana State University – Billings College of Technology to provide **Clean Energy for America's Future**. There are many ideas floating around about biomass and biofuels, but the transition of ideas into projects has been slow. This project is aimed at developing local expertise in the biomass/biofuels processing arena. The proposed training and enhancement of the existing post secondary programs will help in establishing high paying jobs and attracting the "big dollar companies" to the MAP-WIRED Region.

Miles Community College (MCC) is addressing **Today's Fuels for Tomorrow's Growth**. Their project identifies a need for producers to have training in the bioproducts and biofuels industry. Miles Community College is developing a MAP-WIRED Educational Consortium which is committed to providing the education and training necessary to promote biofuels and bioproducts economic development in central and eastern Montana.

"I'm most excited about the framework this grant provides to develop renewable energy," said MCC Director of Distance Education and Community Outreach Shelly Weight. "These renewable energy resources will add value to our agriculture industry – moving us from food and fiber to food, fiber and fuels."

Montana State University –Northern (MSU-Northern) is developing a **Cluster Hub/Center for Research and Testing of Alternative Fuel Systems**. The purpose of

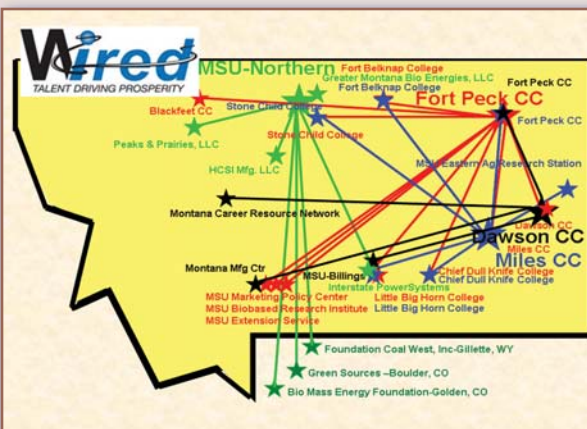
this project is to establish the MSU – Northern Bio-Energy Innovation and Testing Center. This cluster hub will provide applied research and testing resources and training to the North Central Montana region for agriculture production of Bio-Lube and Bio-Fuel products.

"The grant allows us to take our existing automotive and diesel program and enhance it with an infrastructure of technical expertise, test alternative fuels in our engines, analyze performance and emissions and enhance our curriculum with quantifiable research," said MSU Northern Dean Greg Kegel. "Our students and community will benefit most from the expertise we are able to introduce for the first time ever."

Award recipients reside within the identified WIRED region. The institutions will share the million dollar allocation over a three-year period. The funds will be used to provide student programs and job training as well as assisting in the development and implementation of model activities related to the bioproducts industry. The goal is to establish a globally competitive bioenergy and bioproducts cluster in central and eastern Montana.

These educational grants encourage the colleges to partner with other colleges, K-12 schools, community based organizations, businesses, and entrepreneurs. The five other colleges within the WIRED Region are all involved as partners in one or more of the four selected projects. Those colleges include: Blackfeet Community College, Browning; Chief Dull Knife College, Lame Deer; Fort Belknap College, Harlem; Little Big Horn College, Crow Agency; and Stone Child College, Box Elder. Partnerships will be encouraged to develop a sustainable industry in these rural areas. High paying jobs and increased farm income will enhance the stability of the regional economy.

Additional information can be obtained from Dr. David Hall, Grant Manager, at the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, dhall@oche.montana.edu or 406-444-0608.



OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH TRAINING INSTITUTE

Portable Fire Extinguisher Training	Mar 21	Missoula
OSHA Compressed Gas & Welding Requirements	Mar 22	Butte
Effective Workplace Accident Investigation	Mar 22	Missoula
OSHA 501 Construction	Mar 26-30	Billings
Effective Workplace Safety Management Systems	April 5	Miles City
OSHA Requirements for Hearing Conservation, Respiratory Protection in the Workplace	Apr 18	Miles City
OSHA Confined Space Entry Requirements	Apr 18	Glendive
OSHA Confined Space Entry Requirements	Apr 19	Billings
Reducing Ergonomic Injuries in the Workplace	May 15	Missoula
OSHA Forklift Operator Training Requirements	May 17	Missoula
Portable Fire Extinguisher Training	May 23	Glendive
Conducting Effective Workplace Safety Inspections	May 24	Glendive
OSHA 10-Hour General Industry	June 12-13	Missoula
Portable Fire Extinguisher Training	June 13	Great Falls



Hank's Barber Shop, courtesy of David Arndt



Monty Montana and Rex, courtesy of the Cowboy Hall of Fame

Conducting Effective Workplace Safety Inspections	June 14	Great Falls
OSHA Compressed Gas & Welding Requirements	June 21	Great Falls
Understanding & Improving Indoor Air Quality	June 27	Billings
OSHA Forklift Operator Training Requirements	July 19	Billings
Effective Workplace Accident Investigation	Aug 6	Billings
Portable Fire Extinguisher Training	Aug 15	Kalispell
Conducting Effective Workplace Safety Inspections	Aug 16	Kalispell
OSHA 500 General Industry	Aug 20-24	Billings
Reducing Ergonomic Injuries in the Workplace	Sept 25	Glendive
OSHA Compressed Gas & Welding Requirements	Oct 11	Miles City
OSHA 10-Hour General Industry	Oct 17-18	Miles City
Effective Workplace Accident Investigations	Oct 18	Great Falls

For more information please contact (406) 444-6401, www.montanasafety.com

MONTANA COWBOY HALL OF FAME



Wolf Point was designated by legislation in February 2003 as the future home of the **Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame**, an 80,000 square foot museum and gift shop that pays tribute to Montana's rich Cowboy and Indian heritage. In preparation, the Wolf Point Chamber of Commerce donated 29 acres of land along Hwy 2 for the project that includes an original log cabin depicting life in Montana in 1880 to 1910, outdoor interactive exhibits for all ages, guided educational tours, unique Native American and Western memorabilia, and the Tack Room Gift and Art Shop.

The project continues to fundraise through the "Partner Up" program, grants, license plate sales, and special events. Trustees are chosen from 12 Montana geographical districts. "Although the project has raised nearly \$65,000 in license plates alone, we're gearing up for major fundraising starting in May," said Executive Director Christy Stensland. To learn more about how you can give, visit www.montanacowboyfame.com or contact Christy at (406) 653-3800, cowboys@nemont.net.

Ready in the Chute?

In The Draw: Assistance for Business Clinics

City	Date	Location	Sponsor	Phone	Fee
Livingston	April 24	Vince Grant Hall	JSEC	222-0520	\$35
Kalispell	May 2	Outlaw Hotel	Chamber	758-2800	\$45
Hamilton	May 3	Bitterroot River Inn	Chamber	363-2400	\$35/40*
Bozeman	May 10	Holiday Inn	Chamber	586-5421	\$35/50*
Helena	May 30	Red Lion Colonial	Chamber	447-1941	\$40/50*
Wolf Point	June 12	FPCC-Dumont Bldg	Chamber	653-2012	\$30
Glendive	June 13	Eastern Plains Event Center	Chamber	377-5601	\$25/35*
Miles City	June 14	Miles City Club	Chamber	234-2890	\$30
Havre	June 26	Great Northern Inn	Chamber	265-4383	\$30
Conrad	June 27	Norley Hall	Chamber	271-7791	\$30
Billings	Aug 28	MSU Billings/Library Rm148	MSU Billings	896-5890	\$40
Butte	Sept 12	Red Lion Hotel	Chamber	723-3177	\$40
Lewistown	Sept 19	Yogo Inn	JSEC	538-8701	\$35/30**
Great Falls	Sept 20	Town House Inn	Chamber	761-4434	\$40/50*
Polson	Oct 3	Lake County Health Dept	JSEC	883-7885	\$40/35**
Missoula	Oct 4	Quality Inn	Chamber	543-6623	\$35/45**

Registration fees are set by the local sponsor to cover facility costs, including lunch. For more information or to register, please contact your local sponsor.

**Higher prices indicated are for participants that are not current chamber members and ** are for 2 or more attending participants.*

Timed Events on Deck

Billings 16th Annual Jobs Jamboree, Tuesday, March 20, Holiday Inn Grand Montana Convention Center, 1:30pm-6:30pm, contact Ryan Johnson 655-6081.

Missoula JSEC Career Road Show, Tuesday, March 20, Loyola-Sacred Heart High School, 11:45am-3:00pm, contact Deborah Gass 542-5751.

Miles City Job Fair, Thursday, March 22, Miles Community College Centra, 2715 Dickinson St, 10am-4:30pm, contact Cindy Fuhrman 232-8340.

Billings Exceptional Customer Service Part II with Steve Beck, Thursday, March 29, MSU-B, Downtown Campus, 207 No Broadway, Broadway III, 8:00am-12:00pm or 1:00pm-5pm, \$50/person, contact Ryan Johnson 655-6081 to register.

Great Falls 14th Annual Employer Expo, Tuesday, April 13, McLaughlin Center, University of Great Falls, 11am-4:30pm, contact Barbara Hardy at 791-5816 for more information.

2007 Missoula Job Fair, Wednesday, April 25, UM College of Technology, Health Bldg, 909 South Ave, 3:30pm-7pm, contact Lynda Hartless 542-5741.

Livingston Job Fest, Wednesday, June 6, Livingston Civic Center, 2pm-6pm, contact Gail Habener 222-8904.

Contract Acts

The Montana Cardiovascular Health program will host the **2nd Montana Conference on Worklife Wellness** on May 8-9, 2007 in Missoula at the Holiday Inn—Downtown At the Park, registration fees apply. Contact Chelsea Fagen for additional information at (406) 444-4105 or cfagen@mt.gov.

Montana Innovation in Business Conference, Bozeman Hilton Garden Inn, Tuesday, May 22, 8 am-5 pm, \$100/person, lunch and new book Flipping the Switch by Keynote speaker, John G. Miller included, contact Darlene at 582-9200 or Kay at 444-9081.

Check out our extended menu of events on
<http://app.mt.gov/cal/event?calendar>

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Background: Stub on Blue Moon, courtesy of the Cowboy Hall of Fame



Montana
Department of Labor and Industry

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